



Report to Council

Department: Development Services
Division: Planning
Date: August 4, 2020
Prepared by: Corinne Chiasson, Assistant Planner
Report Number: Planning-2020-14
Subject: Site Plan Control Approval for 915 County Road 50 East (Colchester South, Ward 3)
Number of Pages: 9

Recommendation(s)

That Planning report PLANNING2020-14 entitled Site Plan Control Approval for 915 County Road 50 East (Colchester South, Ward 3) prepared by Corinne Chiasson, Assistant Planner, dated August 4, 2020 be received, and

That Bylaw 1925, being a Bylaw to enter into a Site Plan Control Agreement between: The Corporation of the Town of Essex and the Essex Region Conservation Authority for the construction of the John R. Park Homestead Heritage Centre at the intersection of County Road 50 East and Iler Road, be executed and registered.

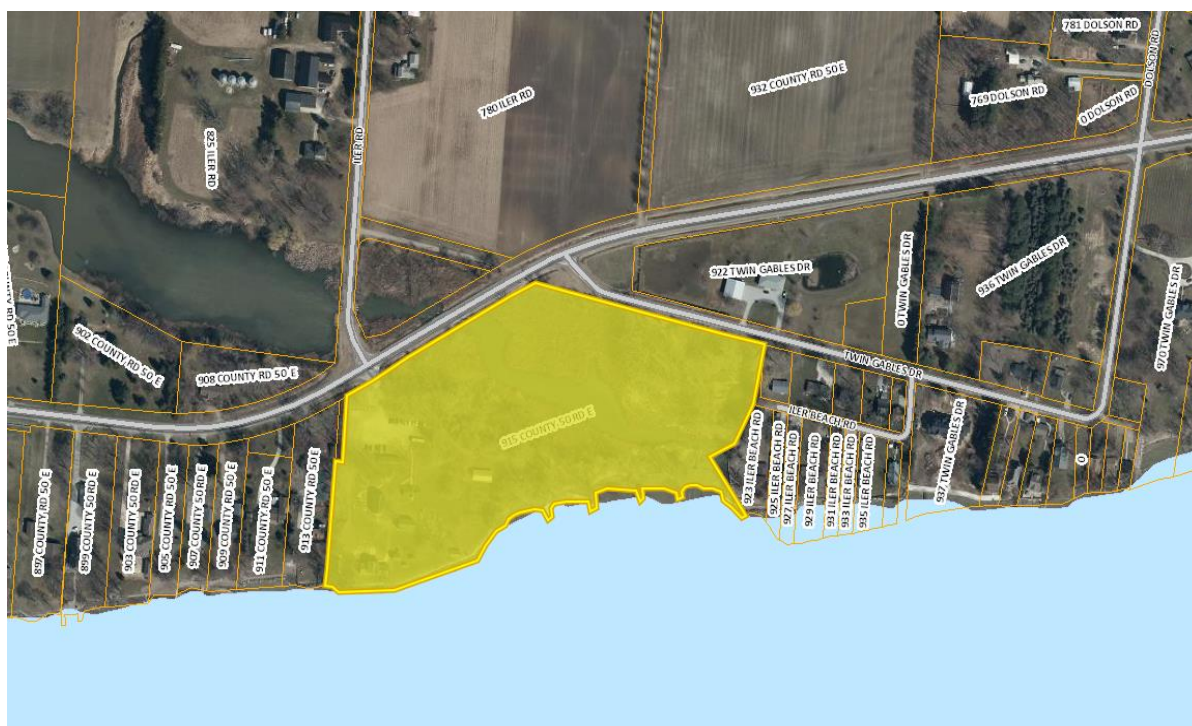
Purpose

To obtain Council's authorization to execute a site plan control agreement for the construction of a 365 square metre cultural heritage centre at the John R. Park

Homestead Conservation Area at the intersection of County Road 50 East and Iler Side Road in Ward 3.

Background

The Town of Essex is in receipt of a site plan control application for the property located at the intersection of County Road 50 East and Iler Road in the former township of Colchester South (Ward 3). The property is identified municipally as 915 County Road 50 East and is identified below:



The subject property is approximately 5.4 hectares in size. The western portion of the site is designated "Agricultural" and the eastern portion is designated "Natural Environment" under the Town of Essex Official Plan. The western portion of the property is zoned Agricultural District 1.2 (A1.2) for limited agricultural and farm

production support activities, and the eastern portion is zoned Natural Environment 1.1 (NE1.1) for Provincially Significant Natural Environment Areas under the Town of Essex Zoning Bylaw, Bylaw 1037.

The property is also subject to Zoning By-law Section 28.1 (16) "Site Specific Zoning Provisions" which includes provisions for additional permitted uses, namely: facilities and activities related to the preservation and display of buildings and items of historic interest; activities of historic interest; the production of heritage acts and crafts; and, an accessory restaurant or snack bar.

The John R. Park Homestead is a living history museum, which contains several historically restored buildings as identified in Figure 1. These include: a classical Greek revival home built in 1842, a working blacksmith shop, smoke house, ice house, horse barn, gift shop, and educational classroom. There is also an additional accessory structure built in the 1980's that houses the 1885 steam powered sawmill engine, a garden and orchard that contains heirloom crops, fruit, vegetables and flowers, and a scenic trail that allows visitors to explore the adjacent provincially significant wetland.





Figure 1. Historic buildings and restored structures at the John R. Park Homestead

The facilities allow visitors and thousands of school children each year to get a taste of life in the 1850's through educational programs and popular public events such as the local "Maple Syrup Festival" and the "Parade of Horses". The John R. Park Homestead has also been designated as a site of cultural heritage significance under Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA).

Discussion

The Proposal

As shown on the attached site plan (Appendix 1-Site Plan), the applicants, Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA), wish to construct a 365 square metre cultural heritage centre at the John R. Park Homestead Conservation Area. The proposed building will provide for a new classroom for educational programs, a tourism centre, a climate controlled exhibit area, offices, and accessible washroom facilities.

As the existing visitor centre is aging, it was determined that the classroom, exhibit space and washroom facilities no longer meet the demands of the growing educational programs and special events. For example, the current classroom seats a maximum of 30 students however 60 students typically arrive on full capacity buses to ensure field trip cost effectiveness to schools. There is also an immediate need to create barrier free accessibility to the site and meet AODA compliance standards.

The proposed cultural heritage centre would allow visitors to be sheltered in inclement weather and provide a temperature controlled environment for warm up or cool down stations. The proposed centre will also improve the overall educational and visitor experience, create a tourism gateway for the Town of Essex, and provide for important facilities to complement the region's growing cycling infrastructure.

Since the John R. Park Homestead is a registered historic site, the proposed heritage centre design has incorporated a high standard of architectural features and material to compliment the historic significance of the existing buildings of the Homestead.

The Essex Municipal Heritage Committee (EMHC) was circulated on this proposal for comments and recommendations. A meeting with the EMHC took place on July 9, 2020 to discuss the proposal. The Committee passed resolution EMHC-2020-07-16 in support of the modification to the John R. Park Homestead (915 County Rd 50 East).

Access and Parking Area

As a result of the proposed development, the applicant is required to provide eleven (11) additional parking spaces, one (1) of which must be reserved as an accessible parking space with an access aisle of 1.5 metres in width parallel to the accessible parking space. The existing parking lot contains forty-nine (49) parking spaces, which

will satisfy the parking space requirement. The applicant has included three (3) additional accessible parking spaces, which exceeds this minimum requirement.

The existing parking area will remain a hard packed gravel surface. A new accessible walkway consisting of hard packed gravel screening will be installed to connect the heritage facility with the parking area. In accordance with Bylaw 1037, all parking and access areas outside of an urban centre or hamlet, at minimum, shall be covered with a gravel surface that is treated on a continual basis to prevent dust contamination onto abutting properties.

ERCA consulted with the Essex County Accessibility Committee to ensure the proposed hard packed gravel screenings walkway would be an acceptable solution for providing accessibility to the new facility without influencing the historic character of the property. The proposal was also circulated to the Town of Essex Accessibility Committee. One (1) recommendation was received to upgrade to a paved surface connecting the new building to the accessible parking spaces.

Any paving of the walkway and parking lot would be pending ERCA budget approvals for the year 2021 and are not a component of the Heritage Centre construction proposal. It was acknowledged that a packed gravel walkway satisfies AODA standards and the Ontario Integrated Accessibility Standards which states the surface must be firm and stable for accessibility. The applicants have been informed that any future proposed changes to the existing parking lot, such as the application of tar and chip or paving material would require an amendment to the Site Plan Control Agreement which would include the submission of a stormwater management plan to the Town of Essex for approval.



Figure 2. Existing walkway

Support Studies

The following support studies were deemed required and were submitted as part of the complete application submission:

- A Traffic Impact Memo
- An Archaeological Assessment
- An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

Stormwater generated from the new structure will be directed away from the structure via downspouts and swales and outlet into Lake Erie. Town of Essex Infrastructure Services has reviewed this information and confirmed that a Stormwater Management Plan is **not** required for the proposed structure.

A Traffic Impact Memo was completed by Landmark Engineers INC and reviewed by the County of Essex. The Memo recommended that the existing garbage receptacle located

at the east side of the driveway entrance to the John R. Park Homestead Conservation Area be relocated to a more convenient location that does not inhibit the sightlines for vehicles accessing the driveway; and, that every practical effort be made to improve sightlines to the east of the Conservation Area by cutting back and controlling vegetation (particularly phragmites) that encroach onto the road right-of-way of County Road 50 in the vicinity of the subject driveway. The Memo also recommended consideration be given to the reduction of the speed limit along County Road 50 km/h in the vicinity of the Conservation Area.

The County of Essex has concurred with the recommendations of the Memo. The applicants have removed the garbage receptacle and the County of Essex Roads Department has confirmed that brushing has been undertaken on the right of way, and will be monitored along this section of County Road 50.

The EIA has determined that all development is proposed to take place outside of any existing natural heritage features and habitat. The EIA has been peer reviewed and approved subject to full implementation of best management practices and protocols identified in the EIA. This has been made a condition of the site plan control agreement.

A Stage 1 and 2 archaeological assessment was completed in accordance with the Ontario Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries' (MHSTCI) *Standards and Guidelines for Consultant Archaeologists* (2011) by a licensed archaeologist. The cultural heritage value or interest of the construction area was sufficiently assessed and documented. The Assessment noted that the site has no further cultural heritage value or interest and that the location does not fulfill the criteria for a Stage 3 archaeological assessment. Therefore, no further archaeological assessment is required for the study area.

The recommendations of the Assessment were subject to (MHSTCI) approval. On July 21, 2020, the MHSTCI forwarded confirmation of approval of the Assessment's recommendations. Their report has been entered into the Ontario Public Register of Archaeological Reports.

Financial Impact

Earlier this year Council approved a \$100,000.00 financial contribution to the new Heritage Centre at John R. Park Homestead in return for a Tourism Information Centre named for the Town of Essex. The Essex Region Conservation Authority has applied for funding under the Colchester & County Road 50 Community Improvement Plan (CIP) to assist with the cost of items such as the site plan control application, permits, patio construction and landscaping. Any funds distributed through the CIP program will be calculated and included as part of the initial financial contribution approved by Council.

Consultations

Kevin Girard, Director, Infrastructure Services

Kevin Carter, Chief Building Official & Manager By-law Enforcement

Rita Jabbour, Manager, Planning Services

Lori Chadwick, Director, Development Services

Heather MacDonald, Assistant Manager, Finance

Kate Giurissevich, Manager of Finance & Business Services

Nelson Silveira, Economic Development Officer

Essex Region Conservation Authority

County of Essex, Transportation Services

OPP Essex Detachment

Town of Essex Accessibility Committee

Essex Municipal Heritage Committee (EMHC)

Link to Strategic Priorities

- ☐ Manage, invest and plan for sustainable municipal infrastructure which meets current and future needs of the municipality and its citizens.
- ☐ Create a safe, friendly and inclusive community which encourages healthy, active living for people of all ages and abilities.
- ☐ Provide a fiscal stewardship and value for tax dollars to ensure long-term financial health to the municipality.
- ☒ Manage responsible and viable growth while preserving and enhancing the unique rural and small town character of the community.
- ☐ Improve the experiences of individuals, as both citizens and customers, in their interactions with the Town of Essex.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Site Plan Control Approval for 915 County Road 50 East (Colchester South, Ward 3) - Planning-2020-07.docx
Attachments:	- Appendix 1 - Site Plan.pdf - By-law 1925 and Site Plan Control Agreement - JRPH.docx
Final Approval Date:	Jul 29, 2020

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Rita Jabbour, Manager, Planning Services - Jul 28, 2020 - 8:35 AM



Lori Chadwick, Director, Development Services - Jul 28, 2020 - 8:48 AM



Chris Nepszy, Chief Administrative Officer - Jul 29, 2020 - 9:01 AM